

Amendments to Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of providing promotional material to consumers comprising:

generating in a merchant computer system a merchant request to stimulate commerce for ~~at least one merchant-specified product~~ products;

establishing a computer communications session between the merchant computer system and a third-party remote shopping stimulation system, wherein the merchant request is conveyed to the third-party remote shopping stimulation system;

reading with said third-party remote shopping stimulation system consumer purchase information from a plurality of merchant computer systems, said consumer purchase information comprising consumer identifying information and product information;

based at least in part on said consumer purchase information, identifying one or more potential consumers who have previously purchased ~~at least one related product related to the at least one merchant-specified product, the at least one related product being a product that is consumed jointly with the at least one merchant-specified product~~ one or more of the merchant-specified products;

determining that at least one of the merchant-specified products is an obsolete product when a new or alternate version of the at least one merchant-specified product is expected to be introduced within a predetermined time period, and identifying the at least one merchant-specified product as an obsolete product;

in said third-party remote shopping stimulation system, generating promotional material for the one or more potential customers identified as having previously purchased the at least one merchant-specified product identified as an obsolete product, and associating said promotional material corresponding to said at least one merchant-specified product with said identified consumers; and

making said promotional material available to said identified consumers using a promotional material delivery system.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, said identifying step further comprising determining a product consumption rate from said consumer purchase information to identify said one or more potential consumers of the ~~at least one merchant-specified product~~ merchant-specified products.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said promotional material and said consumer purchase information include person-to-person transactions and Internet-based transactions.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein each said step is performed responsive to the merchant system detecting a business necessity corresponding to the product identified as an obsolete product, wherein said business necessity ~~is at least one of an associated~~ corresponds to a merchant of product identified as an obsolete product having excess inventory ~~and an associated merchant experiencing a revenue shortfall~~ of the product identified as an obsolete product.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said consumer purchase information is read from a purchase history database comprising consumer purchase information for a plurality of different merchants, and wherein the third-party

remote shopping stimulation system responds to merchant requests from said plurality of different merchants.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~said at least one merchant-specified product is~~ the one or more merchant-specified products comprise a service.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, said product information comprising product expiration information and product identifying information, wherein said step of identifying one or more potential consumers of products is based upon the expiration information of products.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said promotional material made available to said identified consumers is in electronic format.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said promotional material made available to said identified consumers is in printed format.

10. (Currently Amended) A system for providing promotional material to consumers comprising:

a merchant computer system configured to generate a merchant request to stimulate commerce for ~~at least one merchant-specified product~~ one or more merchant-specified products;

a merchant inventory management system configured to track ~~and statistically establish a norm of an inventory level of the at least one merchant-specified product based on received shipments and sales by the merchant of the at least one merchant-~~

specified product shipments received by one or more merchants of the one or more merchant-specified products;

a shopping stimulation logic unit in communication with said merchant inventory management system for ~~detecting a business necessity of the merchant and identifying one or more potential consumers of the at least one merchant-specified product in response to wherein said shopping stimulation logic unit detects the business necessity by detecting when the inventory level of the at least one merchant-specified product deviates from the established norm by more than a pre-selected threshold~~ determining that at least one merchant-specified product is an obsolete product when a new or alternate version of the at least one merchant-specified product is expected to be introduced within a predetermined time period, and identifying the at least one merchant-specified product as an obsolete product;

a promotional information database, accessible by said shopping stimulation logic unit~~[[,]] for storing promotional information relating to said at least one merchant-specified product and~~[[,]] and comprising consumer identifying information identifying one or more potential consumers who have previously purchased the at least one merchant-specified product identified as an obsolete product;

a promotional material delivery system configured to generate promotional material for the one or more potential customers identified as having previously purchased the at least one merchant-specified product identified as an obsolete product and to make said promotional material available to said identified consumers.

11. (Original) The system of claim 10, further comprising:

a consumer purchase information data structure for storing consumer identifying information and product information corresponding to a purchase transaction.

12. (Original) The system of claim 10, further comprising:
a commerce system for collecting said consumer purchase information in a computer communications network environment.
13. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 10, further comprising:
a point of sale system for collecting said consumer purchase information from in store and Internet purchases.
14. (Cancelled)
15. (Cancelled)
16. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of providing promotional material to consumers comprising:
~~generating in a merchant computer system a merchant request to stimulate commerce for at least one merchant-specified product when a product life cycle of said merchant-specified product is determined;~~
establishing a computer communications session between ~~[[the]]~~ a merchant computer system and a third-party remote shopping stimulation system~~[[,]] wherein the merchant request is conveyed to the third-party remote shopping stimulation system;~~
reading with said third-party remote shopping stimulation system consumer purchase information from a plurality of merchant computer systems, said consumer purchase information comprising consumer identifying information and product information corresponding to merchant-specified products;
determining that at least one of the merchant-specified products is an obsolete product when a new or alternate version of the at least one merchant-specified product is

expected to be introduced within a predetermined time period, and identifying the at least one merchant-specified product as an obsolete product;

determining that at least one of the merchant-specified products is an obsolete product when the at least one merchant-specified product has reached an end of a product life-cycle of the merchant-specified product, and identifying the at least one merchant-specified product as an obsolete product; and,

in response thereto to determining that at least one of the merchant-specified products is an obsolete product, identifying one or more potential consumers of the at least one merchant-specified obsolete product based at least in part on said consumer purchase information;

in said third-party remote shopping stimulation system, generating promotional material for the identified obsolete product and associating said promotional material corresponding to said at least one merchant-specified said identified obsolete product with said identified consumers; and

making said promotional material available to said identified consumers using a promotional material delivery system.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, said identifying step further comprising determining a product consumption rate from said consumer purchase information to identify said one or more potential consumers of ~~the at least one merchant-specified product~~ each of the merchant-specified products.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein said promotional material and said consumer purchase information include person-to-person transactions and Internet-based transactions.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein each said step is performed responsive to the merchant system detecting a business necessity corresponding to the product identified as an obsolete product, wherein said business necessity ~~is at least one of an associated~~ corresponds to a merchant of product identified as an obsolete product having excess inventory ~~and an associated merchant experiencing a revenue shortfall of the product identified as an obsolete product.~~

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein said consumer purchase information is read from a purchase history database comprising consumer purchase information for a plurality of different merchants, and wherein the third-party remote shopping stimulation system responds to merchant requests from said plurality of different merchants.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein ~~said at least one merchant-specified product is~~ the merchant-specified products comprise a service.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein said product information further comprises product expiration information and product identifying information, wherein said step of identifying one or more potential consumers of products is additionally based upon the expiration information of products.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein said promotional material made available to said identified consumers is in electronic format.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein said promotional material made available to said identified consumers is in printed format.